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THE ENGLISH SITUATION.¹

You will of course, have construed my title, not as promising a report of the whole English situation, such as Mr. Lowell and his colleagues gave us at our late session, but as meaning rather a few comments on the situation, such as seemed to me most suitable for this occasion. I have nothing new for you. I have not experienced a change of heart. When I read now and then some of the books, articles, speeches on education which pour upon us in a flood, I have the feeling that I am unduly conservative and orthodox; that I belong to the establishment. It is when I observe practice—the actual procedures of schools and teachers—that I grow critical and find I have to rate myself as a dissenter. Thinkers about education who are not in the working harness are invariably discontented with the moral and æsthetic results achieved by the schools. Perhaps I am too much under their influence. But I cannot help it. I have an old habit of looking up the writers on education, classic and modern, and I do not see how I can give it up. Perhaps Professor Hanus or Professor Jacobs, were they to prescribe to me, would insist on my abandoning the pernicious practice of pedagogical reading.

It happened the other day in reading about Pestalozzi in the book of Professor Pinloche, I came upon the following passage, by which I had the happiness to be genuinely startled. Says Pestalozzi:

¹ A paper read before the New England Association of Teachers of English, November 15, 1902.

It will be a great gain to school instruction if the teacher, given a minimum of energy, cannot only not harm, but may even make right progress possible.

And Pinloche adds:

Pestalozzi considers this an essential point. He believes that it is not conceivable that popular education can advance a single step until forms of instruction shall have been found which will make the teacher, at any rate for all elementary knowledge, the mere mechanical tool of a method, the results of which must spring forth by reason of their own nature, and not by the art of the man directing. I assume as absolutely true that a text-book is only so far good as an uninstructed schoolmaster can use it; at any rate so far as his absolute needs are concerned, almost as well as one who is educated and gifted. It must essentially be so constructed that the unlearned man, and even the mother, may find sufficient direction in its guiding clue to be always a step farther than the child itself in the artificial progressive development to which it is to lead the child. More is not necessary, and more you will not be able to give the mass of schoolmasters, at any rate for centuries to come.

Now, this means that Pestalozzi was a mechanician of method. He professed, like Rousseau, to follow nature; but any one else who wished to follow nature must follow *him*. One of the vainest of men, he is to be said not so much to have *had* his method, as to have *been* his method. He was himself his own method, like Milton's evil-minded man in *Comus*, who was himself his own dungeon. A teacher under Pestalozzi would have had to learn the trick, the motions in their proper order, and follow his prescriptions without question. You have seen in various industrial lines most wonderful machines, such as those for making screws, envelopes, loom-harness, or for setting type; and you have observed that the more complicated the machine, the more it spoke of intelligence and shrewdness in the inventor, the less intelligence and skill it required in the operator, who might be a person of the lowest mental grade. On the other hand, you may have seen a machinist addressing himself to a very difficult piece of work. He is to do the whole job with cold-chisel and hammer. You look on astonished at the deftness of his blows, and see that little chisel cut its way through the iron, exactly following the master's plan.

The Pestalozzian ideal of method suggests the operative standing by a machine to oil it and keep it fed with material.

But the modern conception of the teacher's function finds its analogy in the skilled workman, who, before he applies his tools, surveys his work and plans his procedures. Today it is universally insisted that the teacher shall be an educated person to begin with. When we say that a college education liberalizes the mind, we mean that the college-educated person has learned to think for himself, and has become capable of taking the initiative. Thus the secondary schools grow to be somewhat like the colleges, and the teachers of the various departments cease to appear as assistants to the principal, but are themselves, within their spheres, directors and administrators, studying their problems, and with their best wits working out their courses of action.

What I have said applies, of course, to all departments as well as to English; but I submit that it concerns English in a peculiar and special manner, because English has boundaries so wide, so indefinite, so vague, touching all other departments; and because its implications are so multifarious, involving taste, knowledge of various kinds, and patience without limit. A good example of a subject of the other kind—that is, of a subject of a narrow range and of perfectly clear demarcations—is algebra, a course in which must, from the nature of the case, be a routine. But just think of stenography and typewriting—what neat little solid things they are! They are pursued a while, and lo, they are learned. Our pupils pursue our English courses a long while, and of what small portion of the vast subject have they at last achieved an unmistakable mastery?

English teachers today are busily striving to make sure what they want to accomplish, and are studying ways and means, as the existence of this association shows. It behooves us to consider therefore whether in the situation as it exists there are any untoward elements, any hindrances to our obtaining clarity of view as regards our ideals and an assured insight into the value of particular methods and devices.

I name first, as an untoward element in the English situation, the prevalent use of the books known generally as language lessons, manuals of composition, and by other similar names.

You know the kind of books I mean. In the teaching of literature it is quite indispensable to have, besides the texts we are studying, books of history and criticism. But in the teaching of composition, what more is necessary besides the pupil trying to express his thought and the teacher supervising and correcting his performance? It is in the nature of things impossible to fortify a young mind in advance, by lessons and exercises, against errors in speech. A text-book usually commends itself to teachers by its division into portions or doses suitable in amount to be given out, to be conned and memorized, and finally to be heard recited, with performance duly marked. This procedure is irrational. That region of consciousness in which the language sense dwells is far below the stratum where memorizing goes on. You can never get down to that region by any amount of lesson-giving and exercise-writing. Is it necessary to insist that a young person's speech is not to him an objective thing, on which he can bring his intellect to bear—which he can criticise and shape and make conform to rule? No youth corrects or extends his speech until he conceives a genuine interest in literature—a rare thing to happen in school; or until, in the seething ambitions of puberty, he suddenly desires to appear well in certain eyes, and bends his attention to books of manners and etiquette. Without a genuine and profound interest in books, no one ever learns the speech of books. Minds stirred with ambition to acquire the graces of culture are rare in school. Without this stirring, no acquisition. We do find a few. The Russian Jews are often intensely in earnest, and make marvelous progress. But the mass is inert. We are deceived by docility in the performance of tasks. The most perfect docility in lesson-learning is quite consistent with the completest lack of desire to learn anything.

"The codes of most of the German states," says Professor Bolton, "make it explicit that separate systematic instruction in grammar which deals in sentences devoid of connection with each other is prohibited. How many bookfuls of disconnected sentences do our children analyze and parse!"

For the making of such books there has come to be almost a

mania. They constitute a sort of vested interest, where foundations cannot be stirred.

I would abolish the language text-book, and, if I may venture to say it before an audience sure to disapprove so rash an utterance, I would abolish the college-entrance examination in English. One likes to think out his scheme of literature study, to find its basic elements, and organize these elements into a rounded whole. We are thwarted in this perfectly laudable professional ambition. We have to do as do the architects of the new building that is to be erected around the Old South Church: the church is in the way, but is to be left in the way as a monument. A course of instruction that contemplates an examination as its goal necessarily takes a color from the constantly foreseen test. I perceive that teachers generally like this color. We all catch the prevailing tone, and talk it up as a fine development of modern education.

Let us see for a moment how perfectly silly and absurd were the conditions of fifty years ago, from which we have escaped into its splendor of the dawning twentieth century.

I entered the Providence High School as a pupil in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of any such thing as an examination I never heard. My grammar-school teacher simply sent me to the high school, and, like a good little boy I went. There were three men teachers, each having charge of a room, who stood in no hierarchical relation toward each other: there was no principal at all. There were two daily sessions, and my father put a share in the Athenæum as my service to occupy my noonings. This was, of course, the heyday time of my young life. The school left to me all my evenings and my Saturdays. In these evenings I learned German, in those days a rare acquisition. I fitted for college without ever intending it, and entered one day when I had never before thought of such a thing. Two or three professors asked me orally a few questions, I signed my name in Dr. Wayland's presence—and I was matriculated.

How it is today in our high schools I need not describe to you, who know it better than I could tell you. I am grate-

ful to my school for what it did not prevent me from doing. It left me free to browse in a library, where I looked into many books. Today I can hardly get pupils to go to the public library. They have not the time. Whereas I walked to and fro swinging my free arms, now I see boys, but, far more, girls, cumbered with great bags of books for evening study. I abstain, you observe, from moralizing. You shall not charge me with being a *laudator temporis acti*. I take my three hours of English per week, and do the best I can with it in the midst of the hurly-burly, trusting that it is all well.

In any large high school today the note of all procedures is intense effort, hurry, worry, anxiety. Leisure, freedom, are unknown. The principal has no time to talk: he has to hustle and make hustle. The other day I heard a headmaster lament the growing severity of the requirements. The examinations for admission are strained up to higher and higher degrees of difficulty. This is vaunted as a process of improving the secondary education. Whereas the Providence boy of fifty years ago needed a library to supplement his school work, the boy of to-day has no time to waste in alcoves, looking to see what literature is, and to derive impressions brought to him by happy hours. The young people I see in the library are all writing for dear life, copying from old magazines, compiling theses, which when made will be all borrowed, ill-digested, crude, an agony to the serious-minded teacher, worthless to the pupil, an educational, or rather a scholastic, product, unrelated to utility or taste.

Now I am perfectly conscious of the risk I am running of being called a back number. The dread of this stigma keeps many an old man from even the mildest attempt to criticise tendencies, and confines him to reminiscence, where he is still allowed to be interesting. You will say I do not keep up with the procession. But I confess I have the conceit that it is quite as likely the procession does not keep up with me. I am fairly vigilant. The five great educating peoples keep up a constant flow of educational literature. The note of it all is critical, often revolutionary. There is no need of being ignorant of the trend and drift of things.

At the present moment criticism of existing conditions is apt to take the form of complaint that administration has come to overshadow instruction: the teacher is effaced amid the complexities of the organization. The principal holds in his hands a thousand threads, which he must keep clear of snarls, kinks, and tangles. In my old school there was no principal in the modern sense—only teachers. The immense activities of the principal of today are a new development that has come into being under the influence of the same tendencies which, in the spheres of commerce and industry, bring to pass eager expansion, complication and combination of interests, feverish study of all petty details of economy, fierce competition, crushing and destruction of rivals. In many ways the industrial enterprise, which deals with commodities, sets the example for the school, which deals with young, slowly maturing human beings. There is a perpetual refinement of administration, which lets nothing alone, but must ever undertake to organize, schematize, tabulate, draw up documents and reports. As one of our foremost educational critics has put it, it has come to pass that the schools seem to exist for their own formal perfection. The more imposing our system, the more it thrusts into a corner the mere teacher, and the smaller it makes his obscure function appear. As the system attains to more and more self-consciousness, the more it conceives itself like an army, in which the teachers are the privates, who must be trained to obedience, and who are important only in the mass.

What I have said you will at once observe, concerns the other studies also, and not English alone. But it concerns English especially, for the following reasons: English study is altogether peculiar and *sui generis*. In every other study the pupil brings to the school a mind which is a *tabula rasa*, on which we can draw our lines and lay out our work according to scientific principles. No pupil has prepossessions and dominant mental habits which interfere with his acceptance of Boyle's law or his rendering of a Latin sentence. But every pupil, except the just-arrived foreigners, brings a stock of English that overlies and underlies and penetrates his whole nature.

He is under the absolute dominion of his English. The teacher of physics conducts his pupils through interesting and convincing experiments. There is no analogue to this in the teaching of English. The teacher of English must explore minds to find of what sort the mass of pre-existing material is, on which he has to labor to produce, so far as possible, certain expanding and modifying effects. The teacher of physics divides his work, and proceeds from subject to subject, mastering each in turn. The teacher of English confronts all the English a pupil knows each time he speaks or writes. The youth is no more conscious of his power of speech than he is of his digestive and secretive processes, nor can be made so. The youth's speech is a datum, and we have to accept it, wondering how we can ever get at it, or whether we can ever get at it at all.

This is the English teacher's problem. It is a problem infinitely more delicate and difficult than that which confronts any other teacher whatsoever. But it is not merely a more difficult problem: it is a problem of a totally different kind, and cannot be addressed by the same approaches, and worked out by the same simple methods of solution that we are used to in the studies which put before the learner's mind things to him wholly new and objective, and fitted to command his attention and excite his curiosity. The English teacher observes that every interesting person encountered in school or out, every event in life that excites admiration or fear, every story heard that had to be listened to because it caught and held the attention, teaches English. So the English teacher begins to get an adumbration of the method he must elaborate if he too is to teach English. If he has faith in this obvious principle of human nature, he must needs scout the lesson books as a sure obstacle in the way of his endeavor. He perceives that he must somehow join himself to the influences that have the power to reach down to the deep strata where the language sense resides. Is he, or can he make himself, interesting? Is he really worth listening to? Is his teaching formal or is it vital? Does he get attention by deserving it, or by commanding it? In other subjects interest is desirable: in English it is indis-

pensable. Another subject confessedly a grind may be pushed along by main force to an issue of some sort. Attempt this course with English, if you have let your English become a grind, and you come out nowhere, or in the futilities of successful passing of an examination.

Now, the hard schematizing to which a vigorous administration tends in a school, naturally, with the rest of the subjects, spreads itself over the English. I have seen courses in rigid detail laid out by educational authorities and adjusted to years, months, weeks, and so on, and intended by their authors to improve the English instruction. Over-zealous supervision seems sometimes to see no other way to make itself felt. But no organizing genius can plan a mass of detail that can compete with the spontaneous ideas of a rationally trained teacher talking with actual pupils and finding out what they know. Any cargo of plans he may be loaded with as to what he will do first, second, third, he must jettison so as to lighten his hulk. I cannot see how it is possible to teach English except by coming into personal relation with the pupil, and I cannot see how this is to be done otherwise than by the eye, the voice, the tone, the humor. If you are a stanch partisan of a fore-ordained plan of work, and are seeking some term of mild opprobrium to fasten on me as a believer in spontaneity, you may call me an opportunist. I insist on utilizing the opportunity—the precious chance.

The English teacher who surveys his field with due thought finds, both in literature and in composition, certain fundamental categories of form and content to which he will be sure to give their proper attention. He has these in his notebook, and brings them forward as certainly as if he were plowing through the chapters of a printed manual; only he brings them forward at reasonable junctures, in accordance with a rational pedagogy; that is, when they come into relation with some other things, when they get a light from some exercise that is going on, when in any one of innumerable ways they *fit in* and find themselves at home. All the pedagogy I have ever been able to get at justifies me in this insistence. And I say that an administrative authority that runs its steam-roller over all surfaces for the sake of the

general smoothness is pretty sure to crush down the English teacher's burrows, to the infinite detriment of his work.

Closely connected with the growing predominance of the administrative function in all our educational institutions is the tendency to over-intellectualization at the cost of the ethic and emotional elements which we have always proposed to regard as of supreme value. Everything that you can organize into a table or scheme belongs to the intellectual routine. Moral and æsthetic conceptions will not organize at all. Only the daily care of persons conscious of their duty, or of persons who, whether conscious of it or not, radiate good influences, can realize our moral and emotional ideals.

Herbert Spencer quotes with approval the conclusions reached by a friend who had had experience as magistrate in an English city :

The general belief he had reached was that mischief results when intellectualization goes in advance of moralization—a belief which, expressed by him in other and less definite words, at first startled me, though it soon became clear that it was congruous with the views I had often urged.

Again, he speaks of

the vicious conception which pervades the thoughts of teachers at large. Culture, no matter of what kind, must take the shape of tasks. In the minds of most people education and pleasure are mutually exclusive ideas. Disagreeable strain is regarded as necessarily accompanying mental development; and we here see that the same connection of thoughts is extended to bodily development; this must be achieved by the disagreeable muscular strains constituting gymnastics. Moreover, throughout we are shown the ingrained faith in coercion. Pupil and master are correlatives; and the master is conceived as one who exercises such force as he deems needful.

Thoughtful persons in our own country, in England, in Germany, in France, are querying whether the schools are not so busy nursing commerce and industry that they are neglecting character, the great security of states. Is society as well fortified, morally, as it should be, against the ambitions and discontents of citizens? Is our condition in regard to juvenile delinquency as satisfactory as our costly school system should seem to guarantee? We have our answers ready, and do not like to talk about the facts.

The question is: How is an ethic element to be introduced into our education? From the earliest days of my teaching I have this curious reminiscence: Certain boys would not sing. These boys during the music hour were segregated from the rest and made to study moral philosophy in a text-book. The procedure was understood to be punitive. Now, the singing was a distinctly moral and æsthetic influence. The text-book of moral philosophy was merely dead wood. Let it become understood that a movement is on foot to plant a moral element in the schools, and we shall find ourselves flooded with text-books. It will seem to many that without a text-book the teacher cannot even begin. Then, shall the study be elective? How many points shall be assigned to it? How futile to think for a moment of complicating still more our now intolerable complication by adding a new study!

The music, the drawing, the nature study, the gardening, constitute at present the saving remnant in the schools. These seem to come in the form of "unprepared lessons," and to have no untoward elements to prevent them from being enjoyed. To many minds they seem like tawdry fringes hung on the great utilities where the grind comes in. They are not examined in college-entrance examinations. They are negligible quantities. The requirements for admission necessarily imply contempt for the subjects not named in their program.

To the subjects which I have named as being morally and æsthetically the saving remnant—namely: music, drawing, nature-study, gardening—I must add the study of literature conducted as we know Miss Shute conducts it, and others who have caught inspiration from her example. It ought to be possible to include English downright, and without any qualification, in this category of the remnant. But the requirements prevent, and make the English, too, a business of the memory, to be worked off at the latest possible moment before the crucial test comes on so that it may not be forgotten. The fact is, English in our preparatory schools is quite as much a grind as the other subjects, and pupils no more carry away from it impulses that keep them reading than they do from the course in Latin. The

ambition of teachers seems fully satisfied if they get their pupils through the examination. Talk about instilling a love for the English classics is, I believe, at college held to be in very bad form. The crust of intellectualization is thick over us and our customs of speech.

Can anything be done about it? If anything can, it must be within the range of those pupils who are in our courses other than the college preparatory. But here also the outlook is unpromising. Teachers are habituated to a routine, and can hardly be stirred; and pupils seem to crave nothing. We ask ourselves whether there is in our literature anything that will take hold of these young minds. We try to find such things. But we work in solitude, and under all discouragements. The ideal that hovers before us takes the form of a gradually collected body of passages full of vitality and strongly expressed. In this line the Germans have done great things. We can hardly emulate the German teachers in this matter; they are so patient, so thorough, so scientific. I have imported a set of German reading-books, in ten volumes, matching the last ten school years. To find in English the analogues of the pieces that fill these volumes would be impossible. We are a new and a mixed people; the Germans are of pure stock, and have an immense antiquity. The racial strain counts large in the German consciousness. From Arminius to William the people have lived on the same soil. The German child inherits the legend, the tale, as a part of his spiritual life. There is in him a congenital readiness to absorb and assimilate the stories of the fatherland. Compare German juvenile literature with American: both are full of patriotism, but the one seems a natural growth, while the other seems like an accretion, lacking pith and marrow.

Of this German series I take up the last volume, the one designed for *Prima*, the last school class. It contains fifty-eight selections from recent writings by men of note on the most important themes of art, literature, ethics, physical and mental science. These are to be read for their content of thought. Remember, there are no "requirements" issued by the German universities; no examinations by an extra scholastic authority

imposed ; there are no negligible quantities, no freight which the watchful youth perceives is not specified in his bill of lading. The American youth is prepared, or is presumed to be prepared, as the result of his study, let us say, of Latin, to pass an examination with credit. The German youth is prepared, or is presumed to be prepared, as the result of his long study of Latin, to give evidence that his mind is really and actually enriched by the possession of those precious qualities of high culture which the humanists always vaunt as the achievements of Latin study and of nothing else. The German pedagogist is ever trying to deepen, to moralize, to æstheticize, to spiritualize, his instruction ; the American pedagogist increases the requirements. The ambition of the one differs, it seems to me, *toto coelo*, from the ambition of the other.

It is always possible for the individual English teacher to do something on his own account, alone in his study, even without plans for publishing an anthology. The case is lamentable if he has no literary taste, has not read, and is not reading. Just fancy an English teacher who should do as do the Latin teachers—and go over the same ground year after year, himself never reading anything else. But this is a violent supposition ; the case is unthinkable. The reader of a few years' standing has his mind and his notebooks, stored with records which serve to him as *points de repère* finding points whereby he brings forth from his treasure things new and old. Every great expression of a worthy thought has its ancestry and its posterity, and the kinship becomes traceable as you read. Thus the English teacher acquires competence in his department and annotates his author from his own fund. There is nothing in the English class-room so happy as well-stocked memories. Apposite illustration is always beautiful. Any maturer pupil relishes the surprise of finding old thoughts in new shapes. Such a discovery raises the value of an earlier impression to the second power ; a third discovery cubes it. With such experiences it begins to dawn on minds what English literature essentially is in its innermost core. English literature has its own stamp, its own character, its own unity. To the perception of this unity in our literature I believe good guidance is not wholly ineffectual.

As teachers of English we are, of course, constantly seeking means and processes of guidance. Our question oftener is, How can we show the way to pupils willing to learn but not quite knowing how to go to work? than, How can we find out whether pupils have properly studied and can give evidences of effort? But first of all our query is: Do we know the way ourselves, with regard to pieces of literature, can we interpret them? And, after all, what *is* literary interpretation? We probably think first of editorial notes, of talk, of explanations; and something of all this has its proper place and function. He who can talk well should talk, if he is sure he is effectually listened to; he who can elucidate with lucidity should set forth his elucidations. Nor am I a sad cynic with respect to notes, the making of which is a pleasing occupation and speaks of leisure well employed. Dr. Johnson says something to the effect that every writer comes to need notes in the next age. The annotators are really contributors to the general stock of knowledge. With regard, however, to the notes we are used to seeing appended to our school texts of literature, I have something to say in the way of qualification of my grateful acknowledgment of the services rendered to scholars by the annotators. You can hardly get young pupils to look upon the notes at the end of their books otherwise than as so much additional matter to be learned in the expectation that they will be questioned on it in recitation. The notes usually satisfy all curiosity before there is any curiosity to satisfy, and prevent curiosity from coming into existence. If a note would pique curiosity, which then it should leave me to satisfy, that would be delightful. My business as a teacher is to excite curiosity as the absolutely necessary condition antecedent to the giving of instruction. We are all supremely fond of inquisitive pupils. But though my preference is for naked texts, I make no sweeping condemnation of our annotated editions. Every one of them that I examine teaches me something, and points of detail, like dates and names, that I cannot remember, and also illustrative passages that it would be difficult to bring into the class-room, I like to have at hand, as who does not?

Notes and explanatory talk are good so far as they go, but by no means do they go to the root of the matter. All they can do is to clear the ground for the great exercise of the English class-room, namely, expressive oral reading. A piece, to be read rightly, must be understood, and, to be understood, must be rightly read. The correlation is vital and absolute. Language is much more a matter of the voice than of the pen. As Dr. Stanley Hall expresses it, the thought passes more readily by the short circuit to the lips than by the long circuit to the fingers. Everything in our scholastic arrangements tends to make us forget this primal truth. Examinations are all written; nothing in them is spoken, and speaking is consequently relegated to the limbo of negligible quantities. I do not know that in the English situation today there is any fact more notable or more lamentable than the utter decay of expressive reading. The ambition to have it seems no longer to exist. Within the sphere of the schools it is practically a lost art. Readers, or elocutionists, there are, and there are colleges of oratory to train such artists for the delectation of the public. But the schools, from supervisors down, have strangely lost their interest in the business.

Perhaps this almost entire abandonment of the old ambition to grace the reading hour with worthy vocal expression is to be ascribed in part to the perception that the professional artists in this line possess a peculiar power to interpret writers' thoughts and by so doing to give exquisite pleasure to listening audiences—a power evidently depending to some extent on natural gifts, but also cultivated by assiduous study. That is, we despair from the outset of equaling the professionals, and, as we hear no call for such efforts, we conclude to let them have their glory all to themselves. How fortunate it does not occur to us to feel the same way with regard to music and drawing! Perhaps, again, we have seen the elocutionists on their stages try to enhance their effects by tricks we cannot approve. At any rate, the name "elocution" has somehow fallen into reproach, and the elocutionary art is in like repute. Or again, it may be we have seen occasion to observe that much modulation of the voice and, still

more, any facial mobility suited to passionate situations, ruffles that dignified composure of mien which we find a necessary condition for the maintenance of discipline. Only commonplace, what is usual and level to the routine, is safe. Good order is maintained, we know, over a mine of high explosives, and anything dramatic would furnish the spark to set it off. You remember the speech that Hamlet chiefly loved, Æneas's tale to Dido, and how, according to Polonius, he speaks the first dozen lines of it—to give the player a start—with good accent and good discretion. When the player takes it up and proceeds with the the speech, absolutely surrendering himself to the passion of the situation, Polonius, who, earlier in his life, must have been a schoolmaster, begins to feel uncanny, the thing seems so highly improper, and wants the reading stopped. But Hamlet says, "'Tis well," and will have the player speak out the rest of it soon. The modern scholastic world has taken its cue from Polonius's "Prithee, no more," rather than from Hamlet's "Say on."

But these will seem to you fanciful speculations. What I am sure of is that pupils who come to me after a long course of schooling bring with them no ambition to read expressively, and seem even not to know what expressive reading is, their relation to a piece of literature is merely analytic and verbal. Information about a passage or an author they will dutifully look up, and will get it down, more or less correctly transcribed, on their loose sheets of paper. The waste-baskets directly get it all. No study of school methods in English is complete which does not include an examination of the waste-baskets. The habits to which these pupils have been inured by long practice are, by their feeble performance as readers and by their futile notescribbles, unmistakably revealed.

It seems to me that here is one place in our school customs where is needed a decided reform. Pupils are no longer interested in the way English sounds. Their own voices betray a dreadful lack of culture and feeling. Evidently there has been no one to care for their voices. The growing intellectualization of our education—to use again Herbert Spencer's word—has crowded out of our consciousness the voice as an educable

element in the human being. Correspondingly we no longer think of training the ear. As railway examiners find men who are color-blind, so I find girls in plenty who are inflection-deaf. Their model and standard appears to be a rule in arithmetic, which is pure science, to be dealt with by the intellect disembarassed of all distraction of feeling. So they try to get off from my instructional processes by reading *Comus* and *Hamlet* as so much arithmetic, leveling it all down with the sad-irons of their comfortable, lazy habits, to a mere enunciation of the words. The same timidity shows itself in their French and German: they have no ear for discrimination of foreign sounds. If I have occasion to speak of their French and German books, and say *Madame Thérèse*, or *La tulipe noire*, or *La siège de Paris*, or *Maria Stuart*, they are overcome with embarrassment; they do not pronounce these names so; I hope they could, but they will not; they are afraid to. In their social scheme it is bad form to pronounce French and German words in the French and German manner.

Now, all this indicates a languor and slackness in our school methods which is lamentable. I am sorry I cannot gauge the situation by announcing what proportion of our English teachers hold the opinion that here is a positive deficiency that needs vigorous remedial measures. We know what Mr. Russell, of the Worcester Normal School, and Miss Shute, of the Boston City Normal have said on the matter. Do enough others think the same way to justify any hope? Unless the voice and the ear come to their rights in our English teaching, this teaching remains fatally maimed—for moral and emotional ends altogether useless. We are throwing away splendid opportunities, opportunities for just that kind of training which is most precious, and yet is most lacking. In literature that has been loved by generations of men there is always a content of moral and emotional truth, and when this is apprehended, appreciated, and enjoyed, we pass on to more such literature, forbearing to hack and hew and mangle with questions. The college preparatory teacher works under a scheme, and resorts to a pamphlet to know what he must do. The general course still remains plas-

tic. To shape this course in accordance with rational principles is a duty now more pressing incumbent on teachers of English.

A Latin and Greek student for more than fifty years, I cleave to the school of the humanists and remain loyal to the old humanities. But how do we know that we are not now in the midst of a new renaissance? The great themes of history and science, the problems of life, duty, and destiny, were never studied more eagerly than now. As a force in all this spiritual activity the old humanism has lost its hold on men, and operates henceforward from that far-off region of subconscious influence where abide our ancestral and racial qualities of character. Latin is no longer a vehicle to bring into minds any stimulus from the great currents of thought that flow about us in such abundance. This is the sole function of the vernacular literatures. To young and old, to wise and simple, everything comes through the native speech. Humanists always—ever consciously aiming at the good, the true, and the beautiful—we shall do well to take, as the name of our pedagogic cult, the New Humanism.

SAMUEL THURBER.

GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.
Boston.